

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested.

I. STATUS OF CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a), Applicant hereby requests a 1-month extension of the period for response to the outstanding Final Office Action, mailed April 6, 2004, i.e., up to and including August 6, 2004. A check in the amount of \$55.00 to cover such an extension is included herewith. Please charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Claims 1 and 3-71 are pending with all claims having been rejected by the Office Action.

II. 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 AND 103 REJECTIONS

The Office Action also rejects claims 1, 3-12, 14-23, 27-28, 32-36, 38-39, 52-60, and 71 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,341,237 to Hurtado.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 13, 29, 37, and 40-51 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,341,237 to Hurtado either alone or in combination with U.S. Patent No. 4,381,012 to Russek.

It is respectfully submitted that this application is a continuation application of PCT/IE00/00004, filed on January 11, 2000 which claims the benefit of priority to Irish Application No. S1999/0016, filed on January 11, 1999. A certified copy of the priority document is submitted herewith in order to perfect this claim of priority. Accordingly, as the present invention claims priority to a date which predates the earliest priority date of Hurtado, it is respectfully submitted that Hurtado is not a prior art reference. Therefore it is respectfully requested that these rejections be withdrawn.

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CONCLUSION

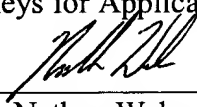
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable over the cited prior art, entry of the foregoing amendment is respectfully requested and early and favorable consideration thereof is solicited.

Please charge any fees incurred by reason of this response and not paid herewith to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,

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